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When they reach the patch, if the crop is good, every one is glad. After the gathering, they all move away again after the buffalo.

Sometimes a man who was lazy, and had planted no tobacco, would go secretly to the patch, and pull a number of plants belonging to some one else, and hide them for his own use. Now, in these prayers that they offer, they do not ask for mercy for thieves. A man who had thus taken what did not belong to him would have a lizard appear to him in a dream, and then he would fall sick and die. The medicine men would know of all this, but they would not do anything. They would just let him die.

This tobacco was given us by the one who made us.

The Blackfoot cosmology is imperfect and vague, and I have been able to obtain nothing like a complete account of it, for I have found no one who appeared to know the story of the beginning of all things.

Some of the Blackfeet now say that originally there was a great womb, in which were conceived the progenitors of all animals now on earth. Among these was Old Man. As the time for their birth drew near, the animals used to quarrel as to which should be the first to be born, and one day, in a fierce struggle about this, the womb burst, and Old Man jumped first to the ground. For this reason, he named all the animals Nis-kum'-iks, Young Brothers; and they, because he was the first-born, called him Old Man.

There are several different accounts of the creation of the people by Old Man. One is that he married a female dog, and that their progeny were the first people. Others, and the ones most often told, have been given in the Old Man stories already related.

There is an account of the creation which is essentially an Algonquin myth, and is told by most of the tribes of this stock from the Atlantic to the Rocky Mountains, though the hero is variously named.

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753 consumption, hemorrhages, and diseases of the digestive
[775] organs. Mice, frogs, snakes, and tailed batrachians are said
[825] to cause much disease among women, and hence should be shunned, and on no account handled.

752 Less important external ailments and hurts, such as ulcers,
757 boils, sprains, and so on, are treated by applying various lotions or poultices, compounded by boiling or macerating certain roots or herbs, known only to the person supplying them. Rheumatic pains are treated in several ways. Sometimes the sweat lodge is used, or hot rocks are applied over the place where the pain is most severe, or actual cautery is practised, by inserting prickly pear thorns in the flesh, and setting fire to them, when they burn to the very point.

755 The sweat lodge, so often referred to, is used as a
757 curative agent, as well as in religious ceremonies, and is
343 considered very beneficial in illness of all kinds. The
354 sweat lodge is built in the shape of a rough hemisphere, three or four feet high and six or eight in diameter. The frame is usually of willow branches, and is covered with cowskins and robes. In the centre of the floor, a small hole is dug out, in which are to be placed red hot stones. Everything being ready, those who are to take the sweat remove their clothing and crowd into the lodge. The hot rocks are then handed in from the fire outside, and the cowskins pulled down to the ground to exclude any cold air.
[782] If a medicine pipe man is not at hand, the oldest person
[887] present begins to pray to the Sun, and at the same time sprinkles water on the hot rocks, and a dense steam rises, making the perspiration fairly drip from the body. Occasionally, if the heat becomes too intense, the covering is
755 raised for a few minutes to admit a little air. The sweat
757 bath lasts for a long time, often an hour or more, during
[782] which many prayers are offered, religious songs chanted, and several pipes smoked to the Sun. As has been said, the
[772] sweat lodge is built to represent the Sun's own lodge or

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home, that is, the world. The ground inside the lodge stands for its surface, which, according to Blackfoot philosophy, is flat and round. The framework represents the sky, which far off, on the horizon, reaches down to and touches the world.

As soon as the sweat is over, the men rush out, and plunge into the stream to cool off. This is invariably done, even in winter, when the ice has to be broken to make a hole large enough to bathe in. It is said that, when the small-pox was raging among these Indians, they used the sweat lodge daily, and that hundreds of them, sick with the disease, were unable to get out of the river, after taking the bath succeeding a sweat, and were carried down stream by the current and drowned.

It is said that wolves, which in former days were extremely numerous, sometimes went crazy, and bit every animal they met with, sometimes even coming into camps and biting dogs, horses, and people. Persons bitten by a mad wolf generally went mad, too. They trembled and their limbs jerked, they made their jaws work and foamed at the mouth, often trying to bite other people. When any one acted in this way, his relations tied him hand and foot with ropes, and, having killed a buffalo, they rolled him up in the green hide, and then built a fire on and around him, leaving him in the fire until the hide began to dry and burn. Then they pulled him out and removed the buffalo hide, and he was cured. While in the fire, the great heat caused him to sweat profusely, so much water coming out of his body that none was left in it, and with the water the disease went out, too. All the old people tell me that they have seen individuals cured in this manner of a mad wolf's bite.

Whenever a person is really sick, a doctor is sent for. Custom requires that he shall be paid for his services before rendering them. So when he is called, the messenger says to him, "A—— presents to you a horse, and asks you to

could see the top of the sacred Pole, they blew on their whistles with short blasts while they bounced up and down with the drum beats. 796 791

Before them was the center of the Earth, marked by the sacred Center Pole. From Earth it reached to the heavens above, symbolically connecting the two into one Universe. The bright colors of the many offerings fluttered at the top of the Center Pole, marking the place where Sky and Earth met. The fork joint represented that all the directions in the Universe are joined together by the Great Spirit to make One. The prayers of the Above Spirits were represented by Wind, which could be heard all around; the prayers of the Earth Spirits were represented by the rustling of the green leaves on the cottonwood boughs. [533] [534] [535] 796 772

"Cheep—cheep—cheep—cheep," sounded the eagle bone whistles as the Weather Dancers rocked on the balls of their feet, accompanied by the rhythm of the drumming and chanting. If a cloud threatened to hide Sun's light, the intensity of the dancing and music increased until the cloud passed out of sight. 791 796 535 789

I believe in this Power of Universal Harmony, for I experienced it myself during the Piegan Medicine Lodge celebration of 1972. The former Weather Dancer, an old man named Makes Summer, taught me the way to use spiritual power passed on from the long-ago. As dark rain clouds threatened overhead, the singing and dancing became more and more intense. The clouds finally separated and Sun shined brightly until the ceremony was over; not until then did it begin to rain. No one remembers a Medicine Lodge ceremony that was ever disturbed by rain. [123]

Wilson brought his notebook and joined the crowd around the Holy Lodge: 796 431

A.[i.e., the Weather Dancers--Analyst]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 36-A]

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use. Buffalo and deer were hunted for meat, hides, and other parts. Fur-bearing animals were hunted and trapped with snares and deadfalls for their skins, which were used for clothing and sacred articles. They were seldom eaten. Animals and birds that spent most or all of their time in water were almost never eaten. Spiritually, they were thought to belong to the *SoyeTuppi*, the Underwater People. Fish were never eaten, except by a few. Before entering any body of water, most people gave an offering of tobacco or beads in recognition of the Powers of Water.

Even back when our People lived in harmony with nature, it could not be said that they never wasted anything. A spiritual person offered to Sun whatever he could not use of his kill. Men on war parties often shot buffalo for food, but could not eat or take back home most of the animal. When our People drove buffalo over cliffs, the ancient manner of hunting that was used until around 1850, they killed many more buffalo than necessary. About that time, buffalo were killed more for their hides than for food. Even our own People began trading buffalo hides and furs they had trapped for goods at the trading post. Thus began the end of our way of life.

Compiling the following list of Indian names and identifying their meanings was difficult, as the Blackfoot language has changed a great deal since the Old Days. Word definitions varied depending on precisely how a person was taught to use the word. In each case I have chosen the definition most often given, or the Old Man's definition.

DOG: *Imitai*; its meaning has been lost. Before horses, dogs were used to pack loads and move camps. The dog of the Old Days looked like a large gray wolf and could drag up to seventy-five pounds on a travois. The average family had about twelve dogs; there were several hundred in a camp. At times they could be quite unmanageable; they

[p. 191-B]

[Nighttime Ceremony, Ca. 1972]

to remind us of the Powers of Earth and all that grows upon it. When the ball was ready, he turned toward me and dropped it into my cupped hands. I rolled the ball between my palms and then brushed it, slowly, twice down each side of my body, while praying to ask that the cleansing Spirits of the sage purify my body and replace any evil in it with the natural goodness of the Earth. When I finished, I passed the sage sacrament to the person at my left, and so it went around the room. More incense was made, and then the young helper was instructed to go out and bring in the offering. He covered himself with his blanket for this sacred duty, and went out to bring in the holy object from its quiet, sacred resting place.

796 788 [782] [783] [782] [292]

The object represents the Spirits who are with us, in our life here on Earth. Fastened to it are symbols that recall to everyone the Powers of the Universe. For instance, the frame of the offering is made of two willow sticks tied together in the shape of a cross; the willows represent trees and bushes, as well as the material from which we build our sweat lodges; and the cross the sticks are tied in stands for the junction of the four sacred directions, which is the place where we stand, each of us, no matter where on this Earth we are. Fastened on top of the cross, the willow stick tied to form a circle speaks for the roundness of our Sun, our Moon, and our Universe, the sacred circle in whose honor we arrange our lodges and our camps. Fastened to the circle are seven black-and-white eagle feathers. Seven is our sacred number, as there are seven moons in each season, and seven stars help us tell time at night and remind us of all the other stars in the nighttime sky; the feathers are black-and-white to remind us of day and night, good and bad, life and death. Bunches of sage are tied to the ends of the arms on the cross because sage is pure and holy in the prairie-life of our Old Ways, and represents the sacredness of all the plants on Earth. Black and red pieces of cloth are tied to the arms of the offering with buckskin thongs; the thongs remind

796 782 778 [924] [823] [772] [237] [861] [824]